



09-10

PLAN FOR 2009-10

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
SERVICES

MINISTRY PLAN FOR 2009-10

Statement from the Minister



Change has come to Saskatchewan, a new era of keeping promises and delivering on the opportunities and potential of this great province on behalf of all of its people.

Over the next year, the Ministry of Social Services will continue to play a vital role in our Government's plan for Securing the Future. The Ministry's Plan for 2009-10 specifies how we intend to accomplish that role. The Plan also identifies how the Ministry's mission, strategies and actions align with Government's vision for a secure and prosperous Saskatchewan, leading the country in economic and population growth, while providing opportunity for a high quality of life for all.

The 2009-10 Budget supports the various Ministry initiatives that are outlined in the following Plan. I will continue to report on promises kept and on other achievements under this Plan, as well as on my Mandate Letter commitments, in our annual report. The Ministry's Plan for 2009-10 demonstrates, once again, our Government's resolve that everyone in Saskatchewan will benefit from our Province's growth and prosperity.

The Honourable Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

Mission Statement

We protect Saskatchewan's vulnerable people and support their inclusion in the province's prosperity.

Response to Government Direction

Ministry Plans for 2009-10 align with Government's vision and goals and the key priorities for 2009-10, as presented in the Government Direction for 2009-10. The 2009-10 Plan communicates a high-level framework for the Ministry's activities over the coming year and reflects the Ministry's primary areas of focus. Together, all ministries support Government's three goals, working towards a secure and prosperous Saskatchewan.

Strategies and Actions

Government Goal – Economic Growth

Sustain Economic Growth for the benefit of Saskatchewan people, ensuring the economy is ready for growth and positioning Saskatchewan to meet the challenges of economic and population growth and development.

Strategy

Key 2009-10 Actions

Support people to move to work by increasing financial incentives and connecting people with employment supports

- Examine earnings exemptions in social assistance for people with disabilities.
- Work with training institutions and industry to develop skilled labour for housing market development.
- Enhance Jobs First and parent support workshops to help people move more quickly into the work force.

Increase the supply of quality rental housing through public and private investment

- Develop a capital proposal for affordable rental housing development.
- Develop strategies to engage the private sector in providing quality, affordable housing.
- Work with the federal Government and other partners towards the construction of new and renovation of existing housing.

Government Goal – Security

Secure Saskatchewan as a safe place to live and raise a family where people are confident in their future, ensuring the people of Saskatchewan benefit from the growing economy.

Strategy

Key 2009-10 Actions

Increase the quality of care for children and youth by ensuring placements meet the needs of the child and that staff and caregivers receive adequate support

- Beginning with stakeholder consultations, undertake a comprehensive review of child welfare legislation aimed at transforming and strengthening the Ministry's service delivery model.
- Explore a range of options for treatment of high-needs youth including options for residential care.
- Continue to implement the Parent Resources for Implementation, Development and Education (PRIDE) training program for foster parents and staff who work with children with complex needs.
- Reimburse foster families for the time they spend completing PRIDE training.
- Increase the rate of compensation for foster families by three per cent.
- Increase funding to the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA) to enhance respite programming for foster families.
- Develop service standards for processes and payments relative to the ongoing relationship between the Ministry and foster families.
- Establish a working group with foster families to review and simplify the foster family payment structure.
- Implement policy changes to enhance the role of foster families in case planning for children in care.
- Establish a mentorship program to allow experienced foster families to assist new foster parents.
- Create a foster families advocate unit to offer foster families an alternate avenue for having their concerns addressed.

Respond to current and future pressures in child welfare by increasing the placement options for children and youth in the care of the Minister

- In conjunction with the SFFA, intensify recruitment activities to increase the number of foster families in the province including:
 - ~ providing funding for promotional activities for foster parent recruitment;
 - ~ hiring a dedicated foster home recruitment specialist to attract First Nations and Métis families; and,
 - ~ launching a new initiative to engage existing foster families in attracting potential foster caregivers.
- Launch Family Finders to locate families for children in care and expand the capacity for appropriate alternate care arrangements.
- Develop 200 additional spaces for children and youth in care.

Prevent children and youth from coming into the care of the Minister by providing supports and services outside of the child welfare system

- Develop plans for a multi-year voluntary prevention strategy focussing on early intervention for families with multiple barriers and providing supports to those exiting the child welfare system.

Strategy	Key 2009-10 Actions
Provide income support for basic needs that reflects the current cost of living	• Increase shelter benefits provided through Ministry income support programs to keep pace with the cost of living.
Support housing affordability by supplementing the cost of renting and operating a home	• Implement a long-term infrastructure improvement plan for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation-owned and non-profit social and affordable housing stock. • Help low-income families with the costs of accommodation through increases to the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement.
Provide people with disabilities a new disability income support plan outside of welfare	• Design a new disability income support program in collaboration with the disability community. • Review assessment practices and earnings exemptions policies for the new income support plan.
Provide people with intellectual disabilities increased access to community-based residential and day programs that meet their needs	• Initiate a multi-year strategy to increase the number of residential and day program spaces to significantly reduce the waiting list for spaces. • Implement a redesigned day program funding system that responds to the assessed needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

Government Goal – Promises

Keep Government's **Promises** and fulfill the commitments of the election, operating with integrity and transparency, accountable to the people of Saskatchewan.

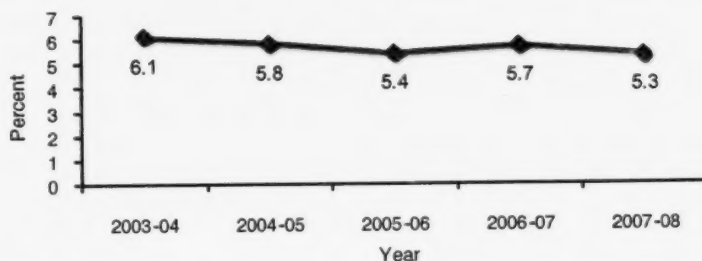
Strategy	Key 2009-10 Actions
Partner with First Nations and Métis to improve Social Services programs	• Work with First Nations organizations to explore additional ways of delivering services (e.g. cultural components, recruitment of staff). • Implement a First Nations and Métis foster home recruitment program. • Partner with the Central Urban Métis Federation Incorporated (CUMFI) to develop new spaces for child welfare in Saskatoon.
Work in partnership with community-based organizations to ensure quality, sustainable and accountable services	• Move towards standardized, long-term and stable funding for community-based organizations (CBOs) to ensure quality and sustainable services, while ensuring greater accountability and alignment with Government's strategic vision. • Expand CBO operational reviews of residential care for children to address long-term stable funding, improved accountability, service standards, and program costs.
Improve client services by upgrading information systems across the Ministry	• Continue the multi-year implementation of a new integrated human services information management system. • Develop plans to replace current systems with one system for client registration, case management, processing of benefits, and information management. • Introduce a new electronic foster home case management and tracking system.
Improve services to clients by investing in a skilled workforce for the Ministry	• Undertake measures to support skill development within the Ministry, and to recruit, retain and engage staff in the development and delivery of social services. • Develop a Ministry human resource plan.

Performance Measures

Measure

Baseline / Trend Line Information

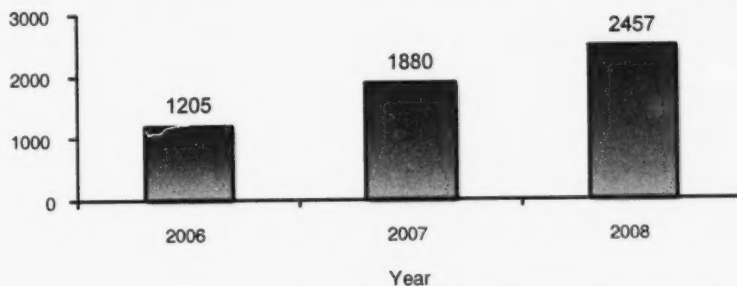
Social assistance beneficiaries as a per cent of the provincial off-reserve population (0 to 64 years of age)



Significance of the Measure

This is a measure of social assistance dependency reflecting the proportion of the population (ages 0 to 64) who live off-reserve, and who depend on social assistance for any or all of their income. Social assistance is affected by many external factors, such as the unemployment rate, the state of the economy, and population growth. Therefore, a trend of decreasing dependency can be attributable to many factors, including improved participation in employment among social assistance households.

The number of affordable housing units developed through housing programs



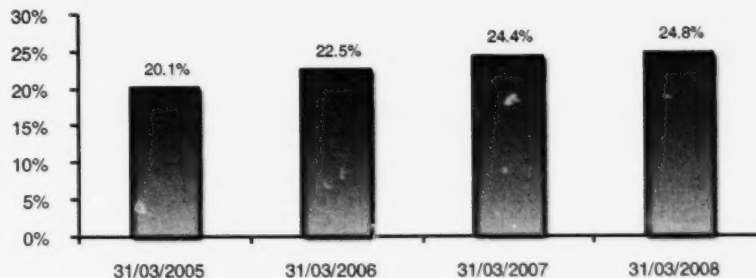
Significance of the Measure

Stable and affordable housing enables people to work and participate in their community by increasing their financial savings and security of tenure. This is a direct measure of new affordable housing for low income families that has been created by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC). This measure also provides a view of how the government is meeting its commitments under different federal and provincial housing programs to develop new affordable housing units.

Measure

The proportion of children who are living out-of-home who are placed with extended family

Baseline / Trend Line Information



Significance of the Measure

When children are at risk of maltreatment it may be necessary to take them into care or place them for a period of time with other families. Evidence has shown that it is often better for children to be placed with extended family members with whom they are familiar. This measure reflects the success of the Ministry in being able to arrange alternative care placements with extended family members, or other families with whom the child has an existing relationship.

Number of children in care of the Ministry



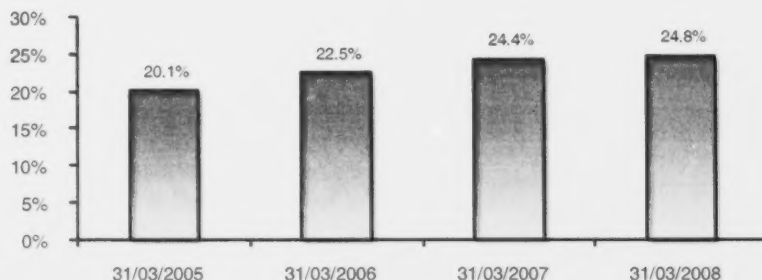
Significance of the Measure

Children may be placed in care of the Ministry on a temporary or permanent basis if their parents are unable to care for them safely. It is appropriate to ensure that children are taken into care only when absolutely necessary. The number of children in care is affected by demographic factors, such as the number of children in different age groups of the population, the incidence of social problems, such as addictions, poverty, domestic violence, and mental health issues within families.

Measure

The proportion of children who are living out-of-home who are placed with extended family

Baseline / Trend Line Information



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Financial Summary

Highlights of Appropriation and Expense 2009-10

Budget Estimates	in thousands of dollars
Central Management and Services	41,165
Employment Support and Income Assistance	313,730
Child and Family Services	125,253
Community Inclusion	152,274
Supporting Families and Building Economic Independence	70,129
Office of Disability Issues	280
Housing	30,236
Ministry Appropriation	733,067
Capital Asset Acquisitions	11,268
Capital Asset Amortization	961
Ministry Expense	722,760
FTE Staff Complement	1,967.1

For more information, see the Budget Estimates at:
<http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/budget/2009-10>

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Ministry of Social Services' Plan and budget support the following highlights:

Seniors

This Budget provides funding to improve programs for seniors. As a result of a mid-year decision to expand the Seniors Income Plan (SIP), the number of seniors eligible for the program increased to 19,800 and the maximum benefit levels increased from \$90 to \$190 for single seniors and from \$72.50 to \$155 for each member of a two person senior household. This Budget provides an additional \$16.5 million in Social Services to pay for those enhancements.

People with Disabilities

Other enhancements being made in 2009-10 are as follows:

- \$35.9 million to continue to address waiting lists in the Community Living Division, significantly reducing the waiting list within four years.

Children's Health and Safety

The Government is committed to making improvements to the Child Welfare system. This Budget provides \$24.9 million as the first instalment in a multi-year strategy. This funding includes:

- \$9.2 million in capital funding to expand alternate space capacity, including group home development with community partners;
- \$15.7 million in operating resources to support new initiatives in the Child Welfare system, including:
 - ~ Additional operating funding to expand alternate space capacity, including group home development with community partners;
 - ~ Creation of a Family Finders program to locate families for children in care; and,
 - ~ Recruitment and retention initiatives (described below).

Recruitment initiatives funded include:

- Promotional activities in partnership with the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA);
- Resources to allow the SFFA to hire a dedicated foster home recruitment specialist to attract aboriginal families;
- Resources to allow the SFFA to respond to initial enquiries from members of the public interested in becoming foster parents, as well as to support the PRIDE training (Parent Resources for Implementation, Development and Education); and,
- Resources to implement a foster family referral program in partnership with the SFFA.

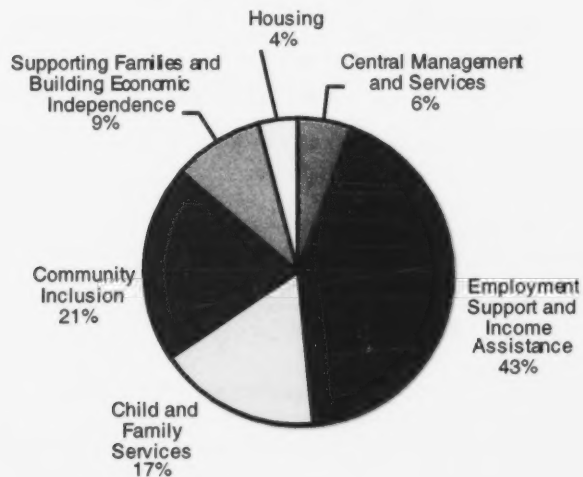
Retention initiatives funded include:

- A 3 per cent increase to the child care rates provided to foster parents; this is in addition to the 17 per cent increase provided in the past 16 months;
- A 3 per cent increase to the child care rates provided to extended family caregivers; this is in addition to the 43 per cent increase provided in the past 16 months;
- New payment provisions to compensate foster families for their time in completing the PRIDE training;
- Expansion to respite programming for foster families;
- Expansion of damage compensation for foster families; and,
- Creation of a mentorship program for new foster parents in partnership with the SFFA.

Improved Social Supports

- Our social assistance and housing programs are being provided with additional support to address increased demand:
 - ~ \$2.7 million for inflationary adjustments in the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan (SAP) and Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) and to respond to higher utility and transportation costs;
 - ~ \$1.7 million to increase daily food allowances for child welfare and Community Living Division group home and day program clients; and,
 - ~ \$12.4 million to adjust shelter rates in the income assistance programs in response to the Task Force on Housing Affordability and to index shelter allowances and supplements.
- In 2009-10, \$15.3 million in housing capital funding will help to renovate government-subsidized rental housing, enhance the Saskatchewan Home Energy Improvement Program, and construct new affordable housing units. This is over and above the \$29.3 million in housing projects announced in the economic booster shot earlier in the year.
- Community Based Organizations will see an increase of \$27.2 million, to provide a further 3 per cent basic grant increase over and above the additional funding announced in both last year's budget and in September 2008. This funding is primarily intended to address recruitment and retention issues.

Ministry Spending by Area



For More Information

Please visit the Ministry's website at www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca for more information on the Ministry's programs and services.

